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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5173
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001028

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND NEA/IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR;
JOINT STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/18/2019
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SUBJECT: 56 AL-AQSA FUGITIVES RECEIVE AMNESTY FROM GOI

Classified By: Deputy Principal Officer Greg Marchese for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: According to Palestinian Authority (PA) officials, the GOI has approved 56 al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade (AAMB) fugitives for full or partial amnesty under a program initiated by the PA and GOI in June 2007. The fugitives, who have been in PA custody, will be subject to varying post-release restrictions ranging from signing pledges of good behavior to nighttime home curfews. The program has processed approximately 900 former AAMB fugitives to date. While they are disappointed at the slow pace of clearances, PA officials generally consider the program a success. End Summary.

Amnesties Range from Full Pardon to Supervised Parole

¶2. (C) The GOI has approved 56 al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade (AAMB) fugitives for amnesty from arrest or prosecution for previous alleged terrorist activity, according to the PA Ministry of Interior (MOI). Six of the 56 have been fully pardoned and, provided they pledge not to engage in future terrorist activity, will be permitted to resume normal life without security restrictions. Twenty-six others will be subject to probation and surveillance following their release. An additional 24 fugitives have received "partial" amnesty, and will be released on the condition that they restrict their movements to Area A, report their home addresses to security authorities, and remain inside their homes at night. Four more names submitted by PA security officials for GOI consideration have been cleared by the GOI as "not wanted".

¶3. (C) The GOI has now granted full or partial amnesty to approximately 900 former AAMB fugitives. PA officials consider the amnesty program, which was set up in June 2007 with the intent of fostering reconciliation and reducing challenges to the authority of PA Security Forces operating in the West Bank, to be an overall success, despite concerns about the pace of the clearance process.

WALLES